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**KYRSTEN SINEMA**

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June 5, 2018

The Honorable Nancy Berryhill  
Acting Commissioner  
U.S. Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Boulevard, 3100 West High Rise  
Baltimore, MD 21235-0001

Dear Acting Commissioner Berryhill:

I write regarding the Social Security Administration's (SSA's) process for providing new Social Security Numbers (SSNs) to victims of synthetic identity theft, many of whom are children.

As you may know, synthetic identity theft is a growing type of financial crime where criminals use a stolen SSN with little or no credit history to open bank accounts or credit cards under an assumed name. Children are common targets due to their lack of credit history, and this type of crime leaves victims with ruined credit and mountains of debt.

On May 24, 2018, the President signed S. 2155 into law. Section 215 of the new law is the Protecting Children from Identity Theft Act, legislation I co-introduced that directs SSA to strengthen and modernize its identity verification system to make it usable for everyday financial activities. These much-needed changes will close a key loophole that criminals exploit to commit synthetic identity theft, and I urge you to implement them expeditiously.

In addition to stopping this type of financial crime in its tracks, we must also ensure that victims of synthetic identity theft have a straightforward process to get new SSNs, so that they can focus on getting ahead and building their futures.

In 2011, an Arizonan named Jill Carlon discovered that her daughter was a victim of synthetic identity theft. Someone used her daughter's SSN to open a number of credit cards and racked up significant debt. To erase the poor credit history and ensure her daughter's SSN could not be used for fraud in the future, Jill contacted SSA to request a new SSN for her daughter.

What should have been a simple fix became a years-long process, miring Jill and her family in government red tape and putting a cloud of financial uncertainty over their lives. She jumped through hoop after hoop at SSA, securing a conviction against the scammer and even changing her daughter's first and middle names to satisfy SSA's bureaucratic requirements. This continued for over six years with no favorable resolution. Earlier this year, an Arizona news station covered Jill's story. Subsequently, SSA resolved the situation and provided Jill's daughter a new SSN.

Arizonans deserve a government working for them, not against them. It should not take a news story for SSA to do what's right, and no parent should be forced to change their child's name as part of the process. Jill's story is a textbook example of government bureaucracy needlessly getting in the way of serving the American people. It is clear to me that SSA did not prioritize a favorable resolution for Jill's daughter. It is deeply unacceptable to me that any Arizonan would be treated this way by their government. The people of my state deserve far better.

Accordingly, I request that you evaluate Jill's experience with SSA to determine what changes to your process can be made so that victims of fraud can be made whole in days, rather than years. I would appreciate a response that outlines the issues and a specific plan and timeframe to address them.

Should statutory changes be needed to clarify that this is a priority for SSA, I stand ready to assist.

Thank you for your attention to this request. I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kyrsten Sinema', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kyrsten Sinema  
Member of Congress